

Next Step Integral Evolving the “We” Practice Led by Stephan Martineau in the Main Hall

A simple outer structure, for example, sitting in a circle with a candle in the middle and beginning in silence, with the focus of emptying and coming to presence. We open to and listen for what actually calls to be shared, rather than what any of us present might personally desire or seek to share.

From here we can go two ways:

- (1) **A non-structured emergent way:** Sometimes this may bring us to sit together in silence for the whole duration. Often an experience, an insight, a question, a feedback is uttered, sometimes a song, poem, or prayer. Other times, dialogue on a particular theme takes place, a collective exploration. The time together has no specific time limit, but usually goes from anywhere between one and a half to two and a half hours, and finds a natural closure.
- (2) **Also emergent, but directed by a specific inquiry (this is what we will do today):** A question or exploration is articulated before we come together, and this becomes the initial impulse for the coming together. We then dive in, inquiring as a collective, and staying with the thread of the exploration, seeking to go deeper and deeper into the inquiry. We listen for the voice of the WE.

What helps us become available and contribute to collective intelligence?

The 10 ingredients (I liked the notes Trevor took from my sharing, so here they are, slightly edited, below):

- 1) *Create A Conducive Environment* – this could be things like making a nicely formed circle; coming to presence together to begin; putting something at the center of the group (on the floor or a small table; we used a nice big round rock at the seminar).
- 2) *Shared Intention* – make the intention to come together and practice these new forms of communication explicit.
- 3) *Inviting the Sacred* – make an explicit intention to invite in the unknown, the mystery. This helps open up the field to the possibility of emergence.
- 4) *Suspending the “Known”* – this one is key. Also known as ‘beginner’s mind’ in the Zen Buddhist tradition, it is a listening for and leaning into the unknown. We try and suspend all that we already know when we enter the conversation. If we come with the answer, nothing new will be able to emerge. As it says in *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, “*In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, in the expert's mind there are few*”.

- 5) *Speak Authentically* – be present; connect our mind with our heart; sit up with a straight back, show up fully, be engaged; listen to what’s arising in our depths.
- 6) *Listen Deeply for the Authentic* – listen in, listen through, focus on the essential; listen to what resonates as authentic in what's being said by any speaker and follow up, build upon that; be inquisitive, curious, open.
- 7) *Be Engaged* – let go of self-concern, do not focus on the chattering mind, or become fascinated by your own thoughts and feelings about what others are saying. Rather, listen to the emerging voice of the WE.
- 8) *Simplicity Beyond Complexity* – often when we connect and speak from an authentic place, there’s a certain simplicity and clarity to what we say. There’s something natural in the process, an ease.
- 9) *Find the Balance Between Ease and Alertness* – we want to be alert to the process so that our intention feeds the field, but we don’t want to get so uptight either that we clamp up; simultaneously we need to be at ease so that we flow with the process, opening ourselves up.
- 10) *Keep the Greater Context Alive* – remember that we are doing this to create a more immediately conducive environment for group communication, and to advance our capacities as humans for communication in the long run. This broader context opens up space in the conversation, and can bring energy to our intention.

Truly coming together could change the world!

“BECOMING PRESENT TO THE “WE” – CREATING THE WEAVE”

Adapted and facilitated by Miriam Mason Martineau for the integral community seminar 2011 from the Weave Practice developed by Christina Vickory & Dustin Diperna, with the We-Practice Community in the Bay Area – thank you for their gracious sharing and inspiration!

Set-up: Sacred space, no distractions, comfortable seating. We sit in a close-knit circle with each person being matched, before we begin, with a person opposite them in the circle. Facilitator sits as part of the circle but is not matched up with someone.

1) **Devotional prayer** to the Source of all Life, invoking guidance and clarity and humility to do this holy work, and our full presence to explore and listen to the emerging “We”. Everyone joining in a sung prayer (we sang “Om Namoh Abitabaya” together).

2) Inviting participants to sink into the **Ground of Being** through a simple guided meditation.

3) **Individual Presencing** (with eyes closed):

* Subtle Body Stretch:

- Breath up spine, exhale down spine >> imagine your spine like a column. Then stretch the *felt* sense of upward and downward motion.
- Then use your *imagination* to extend that column as far up and as far down as possible, all the way to the heavens, and down to the center of the earth.
- Envision this column, envision yourself as a *Column/Pillar of Light* (as if your spine is holding a pillar of light around the circle).

* Heart energy stretch:

- Breath in and out of your Heart – that center within you of compassion and love – and feel the energy in your heart expanding on inhale, relaxing/emptying on exhale.
- Stretch heart further with your imagination >> your heart swelling to fill the circle, radiating and holding the circle with/in your heart, pulsing with each in and outbreath.

4) **Relational Presencing** in dyads: softening the individual focus and practice, and bringing attention to the person opposite you (who you were matched up with at the beginning). Open your eyes and look at person directly across from you.

- Link eyes and offer beams/streams of light, of curiosity and clarity (mental energy) to the other and receive their beam (from 3rd eye) . Engage a circuit of light from your 3rd eye to their’s and back. Offer the question “Who are you?” and receive the question “Who am I?”
- Do the same from the heart >> engaging a circuit of light/energy/love from your heart to their’s and back, giving and receiving.

- Then from the hip (bring awareness to your embodied, physical presence) >> engage a circuit of light from your embodied, physical self to the other, and receive the beam of light from the other, giving and receiving.
- And then from your whole front of energy (mind, heart, body), with your whole being in one large stream of Light, offer and receive.

5) **Collective Presencing of the WE:** expand your attention, bring in a peripheral awareness and bring your focus to the whole web, to the weave of *all* these beams of Light across the circle (the whole web):

- Now notice where the web is the most dense: in the middle, at the center of the circle, and focus with your eyes on the center of the circle >> envision this as the spine of the collective (and then we stretch it with subtle body stretch and heart energy stretch, as before)
 - Breathe into the spine, into this column, of the collective, stretching the felt sense of this collective spine up with inhale and down with exhale.
 - Then imagine stretching it even further (to the heavens, to the center of the earth...) >> forming a Pillar of Light at the center of the circle
 - And then breathe into the collective Heart >> stretch it with inhale and exhale: Awakening the Heart, pulsing with your breath this WE-Heart.

>> Bring your awareness to the felt sense of being in the presence of the WE – being fully alive and present as/in your authentic self, and attentive and listening to the WE that is emerging and present (and that is greater than the sum total of all the individual selves gathered). Attune yourself to this WE. Notice how it feels to be in the presence of and attentive to the WE.

Facilitator offers invitations/suggestions, for example, simply to listen to the WE and give it a voice if anyone feels moved to – we are the WE’s Voice, what would it like to say? Another possibility would be to engage in a shared inquiry (based on ongoing deep listening to the WE)... how might this WE now express itself in the world? Or to do shadow and golden shadow work. Or to invite someone into the center to feel the energy of the WE more fully.

In our time together at the sanctuary at Whidbey Institute, we listened and shared what we heard. Beautiful expressions were uttered. Then to close, we each in our own ways, offered a gesture to the WE, some bowed down, others simply stayed in open presence, other knelt before it. A profound Holy Presence was presenced.

Invitation to everyone to leave the space in silence, and to carry the experience on to the next We-practice session directly following.

Four Fields Practice lead by John Gruber in Cafeteria

First, to acknowledge and direct attention to these two sources that give a deep and full treatment to the four fields of conversation and practice of presencing:

1 - Otto Scharmer's powerpoint from presencing.com reviewing the U Process and levels of conversation:

http://www.presencing.com/docs/tools/UPresentation_v2.1.ppt

2 - Olen Gunnlaugson's dissertation exploring presencing in higher education classrooms:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/25771589/Exploring-Presencing-as-a-Contemplative-Framework-for-Inquiry-in-Higher-Education-Classrooms>

Then below, some helpful figures from Olen's publication and a summary of the fields and process.

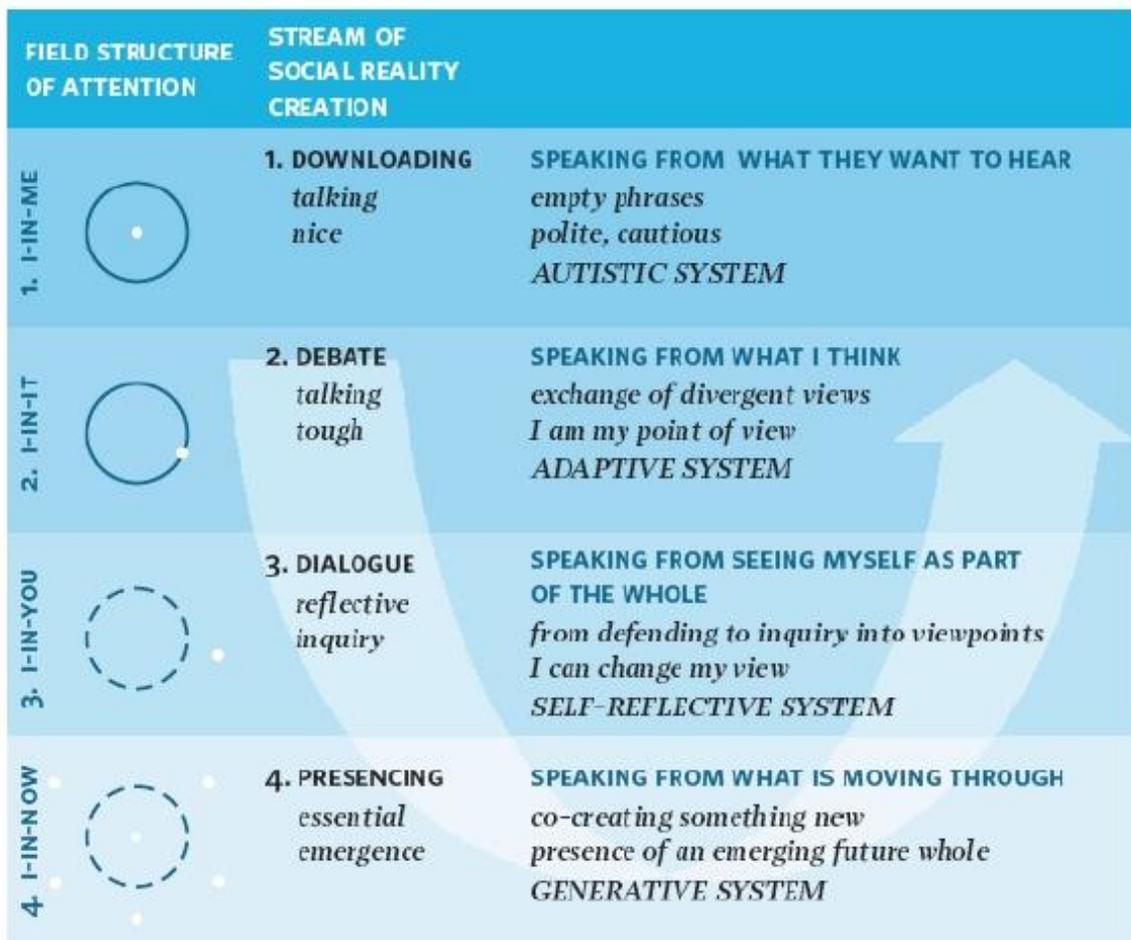


Figure 4.2: Four Fields of Conversation (2) (p.242)

Field 1: Downloading “I – in ME”
Operating from the old me-world

Field 2: Debate “I – in IT”
Operating from the current it-world

Field 3: Dialogue: “I - in YOU”
Operating from the current you-world

Field 4: Presencing: “I – in NOW”
Operating from the highest future possibility that is
wanting to emerge

FIRST field We know well what that first field feels like – I in ME – downloading, speaking from what they want to hear. Reenacting past patterns. Remaining on the surface of our conditioned habits and beliefs. “Talking NICE”

Gesture / process moving deeper - SUSPENDING

Suspension – first step in opening space. Suspending habits, beliefs, pre-existing thoughts, understandings. That which is already known. A release from conditioned thinking to make room for possibility.

SECOND field Now the listening space moves to interacting with data, reacting to that which does not fit our system – Debate – Thomas Huebl said we try to put my shirt on you even if it doesn't fit. Talking Tough – get my point across. Convince you of what I know.

Gesture / process - REDIRECTION – Redirecting our attention and awareness away from all that has been suspended and towards what is newly arising within and around us. Listening from the deeper collective interior.

THIRD field From this field we are ready to genuinely encounter the other. We reach a place of deep listening and a real openness to deep interpersonal sharing. We listen from a place of empathy and connection. We are entirely open and open to our way of seeing and knowing being changed. Speaking through inquiry and reflection.

Gesture / Process – LETTING GO into presencing from the deeper source;
Letting Come that which wants to emerge through us

FOURTH field – Presencing from the Source – connecting to the deepest source, the divine presence that We are, the universal presence that arises through our meeting. Listening to an emergent future and learning from it.

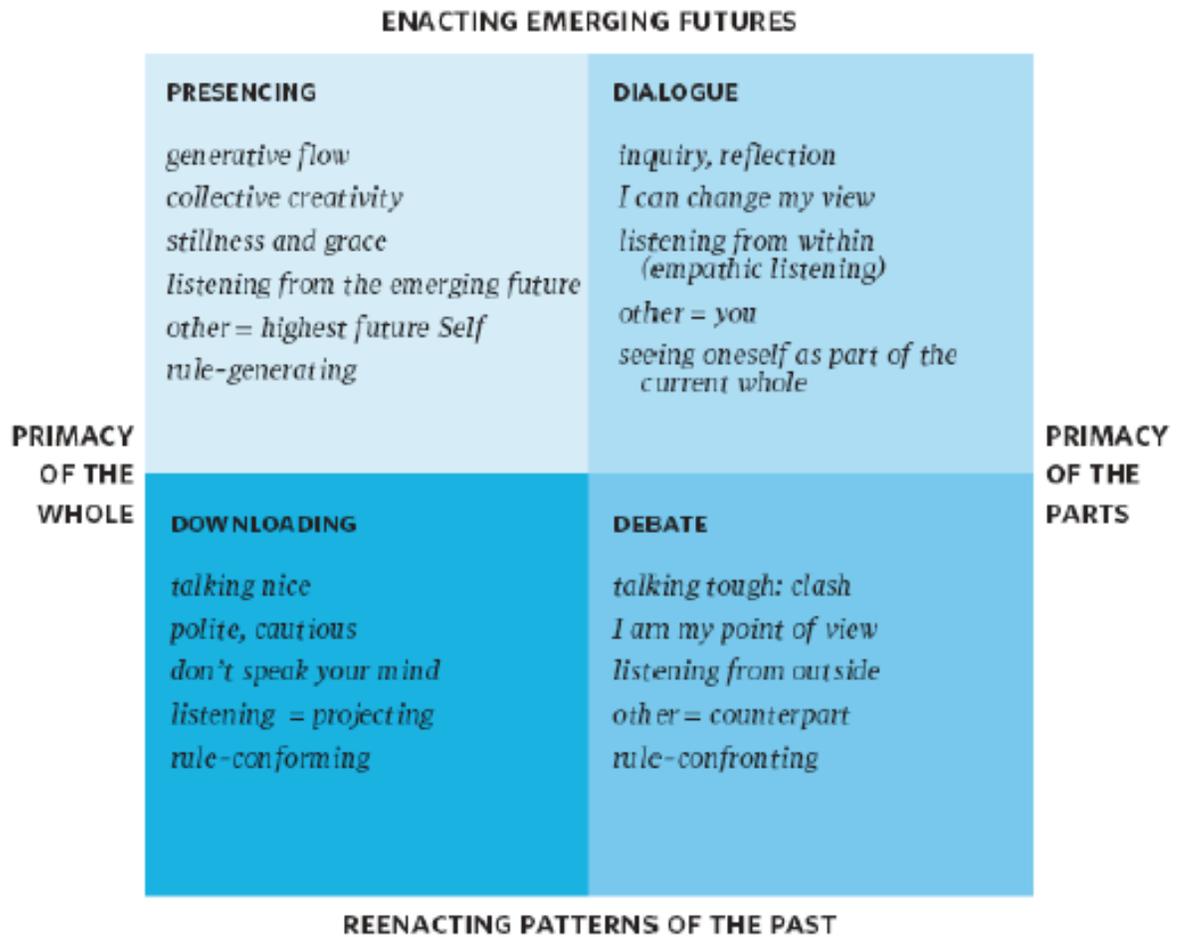


Figure 4.1: The Four Fields of Conversation (Scharmer, 2007, p.274)